

Message Text

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AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BORDEAUX 0148

DEPARTMENT: PASS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EAGR, FR

SUBJECT: LABOR AND AGRARIAN UNREST MARK REENTREE IN THE
SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE.

REF: BORDEAUX 0126 1. SUMMARY. LABOR AND AGRARIAN

1. SUMMARY. LABOR AND AGRARIAN UNREST HAVE HIT THE SOUTHWEST
OF FRANCE EARLIER THAN USUAL AFTER THE RETURN FROM THE SUMMER
VACATIONS. IN THE URBAN LABOR SECTOR THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSE
OF UNREST IS THE THREATENED CLOSURE OF SEVERAL INDUSTRIAL FIRMS
IN THE BORDEAUX AREA BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC, MARKET AND MANAGEMENT
DIFFICULTIES. THERE ARE ALREADY INDICATIONS THAT THE LOCAL
CGT AND CFDT WILL ATTEMPTS TO POLITIZE THIS ISSUE IN A CAMPAIGN
AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT S ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES.
THERE WAS A PROTEST DEMONSTRATION ON AUGUST 31 BEFORE THE
BORDEAUX PREFECTURE BY WORKERS OF A LARGE TEXTILE FACTORY WHICH
IS FACED WITH CLOSURE. IN THE AGRARIAN SECTOR DISSATISFACTION
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OVER THE GOF S DROUGHT COMPENSATION PLAN AS IT APPLIES TO

CERTAIN AREAS IN THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE, COUPLED WITH GENERAL MALAISE OVER INCREASED PRODUCTION COSTS WHICH FARMERS CLAIM ARE NOT MATCHED BY PRICE RISES HAVE RESULTED IN DEMONSTRATIONS IN SEVERAL LOCALITIES. A SERIES OF DEMONSTRATIONS ARE PLANNED BY FARMER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE ESPECIALLY ON OR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 8-9 IN AN OVERALL EFFORT TO TRY TO INFLUENCE BOTH THE GOF AND THE EEC ON THE SCOPE OF MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED TO AID THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. END SUMMARY.

2. URBAN SECTOR.

THE THREATENED CLOSURE OF LOCAL FIRMS SUCH AS BORDEAUX-SUD (METALLURGICAL CONSTRUCTION -SEE REFTEL), ST JOSEPH (TEXTILES) AND MIROIR-BRAUTHITE (STAINLESS STEEL TANKS FOR LIQUIDS) AND THE CONSEQUENT LOSS OF APPROXIMATELY 1,000 JOBS POINTS OUT THE FRAGILITY OF THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR IN THE BORDEAUX AREA. (UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE AQUITAINE REGION IS APPROXIMATELY 42,000 PERSONS WHICH REPRESENTS 4,2 % OF THE INDUSTRIAL LABOR FORCE OF THE ECONOMIC REGION AS A WHOLE. THIS IS APPROXIMATELY THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT. HOWEVER, THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR'S ACTIVE LABOR FORCE IN THE BORDEAUX URBAN COMMUNITY IS 77,000 PERSONS AND THE LOSS OF 1,000 JOBS CAN THREATEN TO BECOME A POLITICAL ISSUE). ALTHOUGH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF THESE FIRMS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS NOW, THERE HAS NOT BEEN ANY SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS. THE LONG DELAYS IN FINDING A SOLUTION ARE ONLY EXACERBATING LABOR UNREST AND MALAISE LOCALLY. THIS SITUATION IS BEING EXPLOITED BY THE LEFTIST TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS. THE CASE OF THE ST JOSEPH TEXTILE COMPANY IS A DRAMATIC EXAMPLE OF THIS. THERE ARE 1,050 EMPLOYEES IN THIS FIRM (87 % ARE WOMEN) AND MANY OF THEM RISK JOINING THE RANKS OF THE UNEMPLOYED IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. IN THEIR DEMONSTRATION BEFORE THE PREFECTURE ON AUGUST 31, THE WORKERS PROTESTED AGAINST THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S AND THE COMPANY'S POLICY WHICH THEY CLAIM IS BASED ON LARGE SCALE JOB REDUCTION, BLOCKING SALARIES AND SUSPENDING BONUSES AND HOLIDAY PAY..

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3. THE PROBLEM OF THIS COMPANY IS TYPICAL OF THE LOCAL SCENE. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT THE COMPANY HAS BEEN VERY POORLY UNCLASSIFIED

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MANAGED IN RECENT YEARS AND THAT THIS IS PROBABLY THE MAJOR REASON FOR ITS IMMINENT CLOSURE. HOWEVER, THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY, AND ESPECIALLY THIS FIRM'S PRODUCT, HAS BEEN RECEIVING CONSIDERABLE COMPETITION FROM ITALIAN MANUFACTURERS WHICH HAVE CUT INTO ITS TRADITIONAL MARKET. ALSO, ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH IS TYPICAL IS THAT LOCAL AND NATIONAL BANKS ARE VERY HESITANT TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO ANY CREDIT LINES AND SCHEMES TO HELP REFLOAT SUCH LOCAL COMPANIES WHICH ARE IN

TROUBLE. DESPITE THE ATTENTION BEING GIVEN THESE PROBLEMS
BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, NO VALID SOLUTIONS SEEM TO BE
ON THE HORIZON AND CONTINUED LABOR UNREST CAN BE EXPECTED.

4. AGRARIAN SECTOR.

MOST OF THE UNREST COMES FROM THE DORDOGNE AREA WHICH WAS
GIVEN THE LOWEST CLASSIFICATION FOR DROUGHT AID (ZONE 3)
IN THE GOF S COMPENSATION PLAN. THE FARMER S ORGANIZATION
FDSEA (FEDERATION DES SYNDICATS D EXPLOITANTS AGRICOLES)
DECLARED IN A TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT GISCARD D ESTAING THAT
IF THE CLASSIFICATION IS NOT REVIEWED THE DORDOGNE COULD
BECOME A 'ZONE OF INSECURITY '. YVES GUENA, THE SECRETARY
GENERAL OF THE UDR, AND ALSO THE DEPUTY MAYOR OF PERIGUEUX
IN THE HEART OF THE DORDOGNE REGION, REPORTEDLY HAS COMPLAINED
TO THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE CONCERNING THE LOW CLASSIFICATION
GIVEN THE DORDOGNE. AT MUSSIDAN (BETWEEN PERIGUEUX AND BORDEAUX),
THE PRESIDENT OF THE FDSEA, CHARLES PLATON, AND OTHER MEMBERS
OF THIS ORGANIZATION BLOCKED ROUTE NATIONALE 89 ON AUGUST 30
IN A PROTEST AGAINST THE GOF S POLICY. THEY DEMANDED THAT
THE DORDOGNE BE RECLASSIFIED PRIORITY ZONE ONE FOR GOVERNMENT
ASSISTANCE AND STATED THEIR OPPOSITION AGAINST A DROUGHT TAX
WHICH THEY CLAIMED WOULD ALSO FALL HEAVILY ON THE FARMERS
AND THE WORKING CLASSES AND DEMANDED THAT THE COMMON MARKET
THE OIL COMPANIES AND MULTINATIONALS SHOULD PAY.

5. FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS ARE PLANNED IN THE LOT ET GARONNE,
THE TARN ET GARONNE, IN THE GERS (ALL CLASSIFIED IN ZONE 3)
AND IN THE MIDI-PYRENEES (CLASSIFIED IN ZONE 4 WHICH GETS NO
ASSISTANCE) ON OR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 8 THRU 9XT

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BORDEAUX 0148
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. THE COMMUNIST

ALIGNED FARMER ORGANIZATION MODEF PLANS A DEMONSTRATION IN THE
POITOU-CHARENTES AREA (ZONE ONE) AT CONFOLENS SEPTEMBER 9 AND
FDSEA WILL MEET ON SEPTEMBER 3 TO PLAN DEMONSTRATIONS IN EIGHT
DEPARTMENTS IN THE SOUTHWEST. THESE DEMONSTRATIONS ARE SEEN
AS AN OVERALL EFFORT TO INFLUENCE NOT ONLY THE GOF BUT ALSO
THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE EEC AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS IN BRUSSELS
WHO HAVE BEEN CONVOKED TO CONSIDER THE DROUGHT EMERGENCY IN
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

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6. IN LOT-ET-GARONNE ROADS WERE BLOCKED AUGUST 31 ON RD 113
NEAR MARMANDE (FOURCADE S HOMETOWN) AGEN AND VILLENEUVE-SUR-LOT. THE
MOUVEMENT DES ORGANISATIONS DE DEFENSE DES EXPLOITATIONS
FAMILIALES (MODEF) HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN THESE DEMONSTRATIONS.
IN THE CORREZE (CHIRAC S STRONGHOLD) MODEF AND CDJA (YOUNG
FARMERS ORGANIZATION) PLAN SO-CALLED 'COMMANDO RAIDS ' ON
OR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 8. AT BRIVE, AT A DINNER CELEBRATING
TENTH STOCK BREEDING FESTIVAL, A DEBATE TOOK PLACE BETWEEN
FARMERS AND THE PREFET OF CORREZE. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF
FDSEA SPOKE IN FAVOR OF EXTENDING FINANCIAL HELP TO ALL
CATEGORIES OF FARMERS. CONSEILLER GENERAL CHAMINADE
(COMMUNIST) OFFERED THE FOLLOWING PLAN AS AN
ALTERNATIVE
TO THE GOF S COMPENSATION PLAN:

A) WRITE A LINE OF CREDIT IN THE GOF BUDGET FOR COMPENSATING
FARMERS

B) MAKE BIG PRODUCERS OF BEER, MINERAL WATER AND OTHER
BEVERAGES PAY THEIR SHARE OF THE COMPENSATION (SIC)

C) DIVERT MONIES FRANCE IS NOW PAYING TO THE COMMON MARKET
TO COMPENSATE FRENCH FARMERS.

7. IN SUM, LABOR UNREST IN BOTH THE URBAN AND AGRARIAN
SECTORS IN THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE CAN BE EXPECTED THROUGHOUT
THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER. THE SUMMER VACATION IS OBVIOUSLY
OVER.DJEREJIAN

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